1540. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and U.K. held first-ever strategic dialogue on defence to improve ties between two countries;

(b) whether U.K. Defence Secretary's during his visit in September-October, 2005 discussed whole gamut of issues;

(c) if so, whether UK Defence Secretary had number of meetings with various leaders including PM of India;

(d) if so, what main points were discussed and to what extent both India and UK have agreed to improve defence ties;

(e) whether any agreement in this regard has been reached; and

(f) if so, the details of same and to what extent it will be helpful for defence needs of India?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom (UK) came to India on a visit from October 4—6,2005.

(b)During his visit a large number of issues were discussed, including bilateral military to military cooperation and issues of mutual interest, including the global fight against terrorism and disaster management, exchanges and cooperation in the field of high technology warfare.

(c)The UK Secretary of State for Defence met with the Raksha Mantri.

(d)The main points discussed with Raksha Mantri related to engaging India more closely due of its pre-eminent role in the region; India's bid for the United Nations security council membership, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and matters relating to terrorism.

(e)No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.